

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

FOR THE

MSU

LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CENTER

Local Government Officials letters of support for the MSU Local Government Center

MUNICIPAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

Choteau – Council Member Corlene Martin

Conrad – Mayor John Shevlin

Fairfield – Mayor Lillian Alfson

Saco – Mayor Howard Pippen

Shelby – Mayor Larry Bonderud

Stanford – Mayor Rose Schindler

Thompson Falls – Mayor Carla Parks

Troy – Mayor Don Banning

MUNICIPAL CLERKS, TREASURERS AND FINANCE OFFICERS

Alberton – Clerk Diane Jodsaas

Baker – Clerk/Treasurer Kevin Dukart

Big Timber – Clerk/Treasurer Gayle McPherson

Bozeman – Clerk Stacy Ulmen

Cascade – Clerk/Treasurer Jodie Campbell

Chinook – Clerk/Treasurer Lorraine Mulonet

Choteau – Finance Officer Jodi Rogers, Deputy Clerks Mary Corey and Linda O'Loughlin

Columbus – Clerk/Treasurer

Conrad – Finance Officer Agnes Fowler

Ekalaka – Clerk/Treasurer Lisa Jourdan

Eureka – Clerk Mary Duram

Forsyth – Clerk/Treasurer Doris Pinkerton

Glasgow – Clerk Stacey Amundson

Hardin – Finance Officer Michelle Dyckman

Hot Springs – Clerk Julie Lazaro

Kevin – Clerk/Treasurer Annie Pickering

Levina – Clerk Ellen Lehfeldt

Libby – Clerk Glenna Hook

Malta – Clerk/Treasurer Carolyn Schmoeckel

Nashua – Clerk/Treasurer Stephanie Viste

Ryegate – Clerk/Treasurer Brenda Kaler

Superior – Clerk/Treasurer Brenda Schneider

Twin Bridges – Clerk/Treasurer Cathy Grose

Whitefish – Clerk Neciele Lorang

Wibaux – Clerk Ginny Archdale

Date: January 18, 2011

To: Education Appropriations Subcommittee

Subject: Funding for Local Government Center

As a member of the City of Choteau's Council for the past 10 years, I would like to convey my support for the Local Government Center.

For those of us in municipal governments, losing the Local Government Center due to budgeting constraints would be devastating. In perspective, imagine what it would be like if the Legislature convened... without the support of Legislative Services. It costs a lot more to fix mistakes than it does to ensure that mistakes aren't made in the first place.

Please say "yes" to fund the Local Government Center for FY12-13 by increasing MSU Extension's budget to continue its support for the Center.

Thank you,

Corlene Martin
City of Choteau
Council Member
PO Box 215
Choteau, MT 59422

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

I am writing this letter as the Mayor for the City of Conrad. I can personally say that the training I have received has made my job as Mayor much less of a strain. I know that when an issue comes before myself and the Council I can contact the MSU Local Government Center, get excellent and correct direction which thus allows us to make good choices in our positions.

When we get the proper directions through our questions to MSU Local Government Center we save the taxpayers of our communities by avoiding costly legal issues as well as not having to re-invent the wheel to make our city or town work most effectively.

The training our Finance Officer has received through direct contact as well as the annual training sessions has made her a more valuable asset to our community. I can't imagine any level of local government not having this agency to guide and direct them through the bumps of their jobs. You cannot put a price on the value of the asset provided especially with the high turnover of elected as well as hired governmental employees. It is a necessity to retain the funding for this agency.

I strongly urge the funding to continue for the MSU Local Government Center to ensure accurate training and guidance is available to all governmental agencies.

John P. Shevlin, Mayor
City of Conrad
406-271-3623
406-271-5602-fax
cityconrad@yahoo.com

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

I was one of the lucky ones that had a chance to attend one of the Municipal Institutes in Billings put on by the Local Government Center during the late 1990s. I had been a council person for several years, and only went because our Clerk talked me into it.

Needless to say, even though I had my own copy of the Montana Codes Annotated, I didn't know anything about Municipal Government or my role in it. It was such a help to me that I was able to convince several of our council members to attend later sessions. Then after becoming Mayor in 2008, I have gone every year.

To lose this very important knowledge source would be an injustice to all the Towns and Cities of Montana alone without the serious impact upon those most important people, our Clerks, Treasurers and Attorneys. The things taught at these yearly schools have kept many of us from making decisions that were not legal.

Please feel free to include my comments in any correspondence with the legislature.

Howard Pippin
Mayor of Saco

Dear Roy, Llew and Bob:

You are the three folks I know on the Education Appropriations Subcommittee so I am contacting you concerning the funding for the Local Government Center. First of all I hope all is going well for you at the session and I look forward to seeing you when I come down.

The Local Government Center at MSU provided very valuable information to me as I assumed my office as mayor some 20 plus years ago.

I have returned to the center annually and have conferred with them many time during the years via phone and email. They are a reliable resource for issues that come before elected officials.

The center provides a real service to elected officials across the State of Montana. The programs they have developed to assisted newly elected officials in defining their roles and responsibilities as elected officials are second to none. They have also developed an excellent relationship with insurance companies like the Montana Municipal Interlocal Authority.

They are a small, lean and mean staff that does an excellent job of serving Montana citizens.

I would ask for your support for their funding proposal and I would be happy to visit with you at any time concerning this issue.

Thank you.

Larry J. Bonderud, Mayor
City of Shelby
larry@shelbymt.com
phone 406-434-5222
cell 406-450-5196

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

I believe the training sessions that are provided for the Mayors, and all elected officials is very much a necessity. It opened my eyes as to the responsibilities that

are put on the officials & others. Although I cannot attend all of them, I know that they are very useful to the new and old officials in the state.
I definitely support Dan and others for the funding of this LGC

Rose Schindler
Mayor
Town of Stanford

Hello Pat Ingraham and Greg Hinkle;

I understand that the Local Government Center in Bozeman is under consideration for being eliminated. I know it is not out of committee yet, but I would really like to ask you to encourage the members of that committee to continue its funding. So much of Local Government is done on a very low paid or unpaid voluntary basis. Having this resource gives us a place to go to get our answers quickly (when we need them). It keeps us from stumbling and falling over all of the legalisms and pitfalls of governmental functioning's and helps tremendously in serving our communities. None of us are professional political leaders. It is support organizations like this that helps keep the grassroots leadership effectively working.

I know you are busy and I thank you for the time that you might give to this.

Sincerely,

Carla
Carla M. Parks
Mayor
City of Thompson Falls
PO Box 99
Thompson Falls, MT 59873
Office 406-827-3557
Cell 406-381-6903

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

This is in response to word we have received stating there is not a funding request for the Local Government Center in the MSU Extensions budget. We all know

that the budget process is tough for this year; however, there isn't any one agency that does more for the citizens of Montana than those that work so hard for all of us at the Local Government Center. Who would all of the elected officials go to for information, insight, and hard facts that help us navigate local government in this day and age? Our mayors, our councils, our clerks, deputy clerks, treasurers, finance officers, city managers; I could go on and on as to the training that all of us get from Dan Clark and his fine staff. We cannot and should not let this go by without considering the advantages for everyone to keep the Local Government Center in Bozeman funded.

The people we represent in our cities and town benefit from the training given by the Local Government Center to those entrusted to have their best interests at heart.

Please do all that you can to guide those that have the authority to fund the Local Government Center to a realization that this is something that needs to be accomplished for the good of us all. Thank you.

Donald C. Banning, Mayor
City of Troy
P O Box 823
Troy, Montana 59935

Phone: 406-295-4151
Fax: 406-295-4540
email: citytroy@troymt.net

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

I am writing to show my support of the Local Government Center in Bozeman. I have been a clerk for 4 years now and without their support and the support of all of the Clerks I would not know all of the things that I now know about being a clerk. Please continue their support.

Diane Jodsaas
Town Clerk
Town of Alberton

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

Please continue support for the Local Government Center stationed at MSU Bozeman. As a Municipal Clerk and Treasurer the training and support provided by the Local Government Center staff is invaluable and one of the few resources of this nature available to local government in Montana.

Kevin J. Dukart

Clerk/Treasurer
City of Baker

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

It seems the business of local government gets more sophisticated every day. Clerk's are expected to have the knowledge of a CPA and a law degree as well (all without the pay scale). LGC is on of the resources we have to keep up with all the new State and Federal laws, not to mention all the new accounting requirements. If we do not have the LGC I don't know who we will turn to.

Gayle McPherson,
Clerk/Treasurer, Big Timber, MT

Hello Chairman Hollandsworth and Committee Members of the Joint Education Appropriations Subcommittee,

Please add funding to MSU Extension's budget to support the work of the Local Government Center.

We just cannot afford to lose this important source here in the State of Montana for those who work and volunteer in Local Government.

- **In 2009, there was over \$916 million dollars in total funds appropriated to municipal and county officials.** Adding the money collected by

revenue funds and special districts the amount **of money managed by local governments in Montana is in excess of 1 billion dollars.**

It is critical that those who work or volunteer in Local Government be educated in order to be the most effective in their positions. The Local Government Center has always been an important source for training, technical support and research projects for Municipalities and Counties.

The City of Bozeman's Charter mandates that all City Officials and Staff take part in an annual Ethics Training. For two years in a row, the Local Government Center has assisted us with this requirement and trained over 500 people. They also assisted with creating an Ethics handbook for Bozeman. They have been extremely helpful to our City.

Respectfully,

Stacy Ulmen, Certified Municipal Clerk
Bozeman City Clerk

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

As Clerk/Treasurer for the Town of Cascade for a little over one year, I have found the Local Government Center invaluable! The knowledge and training that Dan Clark and the rest of the group brings is amazing, especially to a new clerk! I don't know how I would've dealt with quite a few issues without them. Thank you for this fantastic resource!

Sincerely,

Jodie Campbell
Clerk/Treasurer Town of Cascade

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

I have been with the City for 28 years and have worked with the Local Government Center for the same amount of time. This group is invaluable to the Cities and Towns of Montana in that when we, the Clerks, have a question, we know that we can contact them and get an answer in a timely

manner. The Local Government Center is our support group. We need them!!!!

Lorraine Mulonet
City Clerk/Treasurer
City of Chinook

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

The MSU Local Government Center in Bozeman is an integral partner with not only large cities but smaller rural communities. Their knowledge and technical assistance is vital in helping to train not only our municipal clerks, treasurers, and finance officers but mayors, council people, city attorneys, and the list goes on. It is imperative to this great state of Montana that this valuable resource continue to be funded.

Sincerely,
Jodi Rogers, Finance Officer, City of Choteau
Mary Corey, Deputy Clerk, City of Choteau
Linda O'Loughlin, Deputy Clerk, City of Choteau

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

There are 129 members of the Montana League of Cities and Towns. That's all of Montana. By the time Stacey makes her presentation, you will have heard support for Dan Clark & Co. from most of them.

Speaking for myself, I have been a Clerk-Treasurer for twenty five years and only missed a couple of events coordinated by the Local Government Center. There is NO other place for Clerks or Elected Officials to get the training offered by them. This would be a giant step backwards if their funding is not kept or increased.

Keep in mind that Wyoming has no Association like ours, so many of their Clerks come to Montana. New Clerks will have nowhere to go to learn what is needed to do today's jobs.

Ronald D. Barndt, CMC

Town Clerk-Treasurer
Town of Columbus

To Whom It May Concern:

The MSU Local Government Center located in Bozeman is an asset that for all governmental agencies is a must have. The training and education that is offered through them, at no direct cost to the entity, benefits in far reaching means to all levels affiliated with it.

Most communities, due to all the other unfunded mandates we must deal with, could not afford the services offered if they had to pay for them. We benefit many times over with the services they offer and thus make us better clerks and treasurers who are the guardians of the money for the Cities and Towns. All levels of government benefit from MSU Local Government Centers services which in these economic times cannot be overlooked. You are getting the most bang for your buck when you spend it on the MSU Local Government Center.

I urge your continued support of the MSU Local Government Center at no less than the present level. Increased funding would be greatly appreciated and would be money well spent by the taxpayers of the State of Montana.

Agnes Fowler, CMC
Finance Officer
City of Conrad
406-271-3623
406-271-5602-fax
cityconrad@yahoo.com

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

When I started my job 2 years ago as Town Clerk/Treasurer in the Southeast corner of Montana, I felt isolated, uninformed, and separated from the other Towns/Cities in Montana. What the Local Government Center has done is create an information and idea sharing forum to ALL of the Towns and Cities in Montana from Eureka to Ekalaka. It has done that with the Clerk's List serve and also through the training sessions and phone calls directly to the Local Government Center Office. Dan has done a wonderful job with keeping the programs/training

relevant with current issues as well as moving forward with technology. The Local Government Center is vital to the rural towns in Montana.

Lisa Jourdan, Clerk/Treasurer
Town of Ekalaka
PO Box 338
Ekalaka, MT 59324
406.775.8731 Phone
406.775.8731 Fax

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

Dan Clark and the staff at Montana State University Local Government Center are an excellent source of information and for training for clerks and treasurers for Montana towns. They are a big reason for the success of the Clerk's Institute in Billings. And throughout the year, they are helpful and informative to the clerks. Every year there are more requirements of the town clerks and treasurers, and it is extremely helpful to have the Local Government Service just a phone call or e-mail away to answer those difficult questions.

Thank you.
Mary Duram, Town of Eureka

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

I am speaking as Vice President of Third Class Cities for the Montana Municipal Clerks, Treasurers and Finance Officers Association, please support the Local Government Center, for all the cities and towns in the State of Montana. There is no other training resource for the Clerks, Treasurers, Finance Officers and also for the elected officers. If each one of you could attend the training in May that is provided for the local governments, you would understand the importance of this group. I hope you support the Local Government Center not only now, but for years to come.

Sincerely,
Doris Pinkerton, CMC

Clerk Treasurer
City of Forsyth

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

The Local Government Center is a great resource for all cities and towns in the state of Montana. The Montana Association of Clerks, Treasurers and Finance Officers would be lost without them.

Stacey Amundson
City Clerk
City of Glasgow

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

The LOCAL GOVERNMENT CENTER has been a tremendous resource and support during my short time here (3years). When you start working for a city, there is so much to know, and things continually change. This is where Dan Clark and staff help fill in the gaps. Not only do they help with training (both coordinating institutes and doing training sessions), they are a resource that can be turned to whenever a situation comes up.

Please continue to support us by supporting the work of the Local Government Center.

Thank you,
Michelle Dyckman
Finance Officer
City of Hardin 406 North Cheyenne
Hardin MT 59034(406) 665-9293
cityfinance@hardinmt.com

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

The Town of Hot Springs has benefitted greatly from the assistance of Local Government Center. A small community like ours is often left on its own to comply with many of the requirements and provide services to the community. Local Government Center has provided training for the clerk and elected officials and provided an opportunity for the towns to share ideas and standardize operations. The Town of Hot Springs supports the Local Government Center and funding of the Center.

Julie Lazaro
Town Clerk
Town of Hot Springs

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

The LOCAL GOVERNMENT CENTER has been a tremendous resource and support since the beginning of my employment with the Town of Kevin. When you start working for a town, there is so much to know, and things continually change. This is where Dan Clark and staff help fill in the gaps. Not only do they help with training (both coordinating institutes and doing training sessions), they are a resource that can be turned to whenever a situation comes up.

Please continue to support us by supporting the work of the Local Government Center.

Annie Pickering
Clerk/Treasurer
Town of Kevin

Honorable Members of the Legislative Assembly;

The Local Government Center in Bozeman is the grease for the 'Wheels of Governing' in every single Town or City Council in Montana. I am from a very small town, but the rules are the same no matter where you are and each Clerk has to do their job to keep things running smoothly - rules, regulations and procedures. We report on these issues, follow laws, pay bills to keep things moving smoothly, and most importantly, perform as guardians of the Taxpayer's money. The Local Government Center is the go-to place for any question about procedure to help employees of Local Government do their job CORRECTLY!. LGC's representation at State Association Meetings and Training Seminars is a given and they always present very timely information for helping Clerks and Local Elected Officers do their job in a professional manner. I have also participated in their Webinars and this technology is invaluable in a state this size.

I hope the show of support from Towns and Cities all over the State of Montana will speak volumes and you can understand the importance of your vote to continue funding or increase it to provide the latest news and law information to all of us. This is your opportunity to support your constituents in the truest way!!! Thank you for taking the time to consider my words.

Sincerely yours,

Ellen Lehfeldt
Town Clerk of Lavina

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

The Local Government Center has been a great benefit to the City of Libby. I don't think I could have learned nor done my job as City Clerk-Treasurer correctly without them. Libby would certainly like to see them continue.

Glena L. Hook
City Clerk-Treasurer
City of Libby

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

As Clerk/Treasurer for the City of Malta and also the President of the Montana Municipal Clerks, Treasurers and Finance Officers Association, I will attest to the importance of the Local Government Center. I have had positive contact with this group of individuals whether it concerned a local issue or the week long school held each year with their assistance. This group is of great value to small and large communities alike. Dan Clark is very knowledgeable and is a great asset to us as well as the others at the LGC.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Schmoeckel, cmc
Clerk/Treasurer
President MMCT&FOA

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

I have been a Clerk for one year now and without the help of Dan Clark and the Local Government Center I don't think I would have made it. The knowledge and training Dan and his staff provide for clerks is invaluable!! The Local Government Center is a tremendous asset to the clerks in Montana no matter the size of the community. Thank you for continuing to support the Local Government Center.

Stephanie Viste, Clerk/Treasurer
Town of Nashua
PO Box 47
Nashua, MT 59248
(406) 746-3461

Dear Montana Legislators,

I am writing in support of the Local Government Centers, having been a Clerk/Treasurer for 5 years now and had many occasions to use the Local Government Center I can attest the importance of this service for myself as well as any new clerks in the future. Clerk/treasurers have a job that is different from most and the only education we get is through our Local Government Center. The State of Montana will be in bad shape if we lose the only source of Education to conduct Local Government as are required. Please continue your support for the office that makes us all accountable.

Brenda L. Kaler

Clerk/Treasurer P.O. Box 163,
Ryegate, MT. 59074
1-406-568-2320

January 21, 2010

RE: Local Government Center

MSU Local Government Center has been an invaluable resource for education, training, outreach and research for Public Officials and Public Employees of 1,127 distinct local governments for 26 years. Currently there is no funding within the MSU Extension state general fund to support continued operations of the MSU Local Government Center beyond FY 2011. The services provided by the MSU Local Government Center are in jeopardy of discontinuation in 2012 without state support.

In 2009, MSU Extension was asked to provide institutional oversight to the Local Government Center.

The Local Government Center was originally located on the Montana State University campus in the College of Letters and Science, affiliated with the Department of Political Science. It is a natural fit for the Local Government Center to affiliate with Extension, due to its comprehensive services to counties and municipalities and the broad outreach of the LGC across the State of Montana. Every Montana resident lives within and is affected by one or more local government.

In 2009, there was over \$916 million dollars in total funds appropriated to municipal and county officials. Adding the money collected by revenue funds and special districts the amount of money managed by local governments in Montana is in excess of 1 billion dollars making it imperative to have the training and resources available to those who are managing these public assets.

Montana's 1,224 municipal and county elected officials employ 11,345 employees. In FY 2010, over 7,570 local government officials participated in one or more of the 123 workshops and trainings offered by the Local Government Center. Montana has over 529 self-governed Special Districts. These Special Districts, such as resort tax districts or rural water and sewer districts, reside within the jurisdiction of the counties but are not governed by counties. These Special Districts have elected boards, which the Local Government Center provides vital support through training and technical assistance to these elected boards. The education, training, outreach and research provided by the Local

Government Center has benefited every City, Town, County, and Special District in the State of Montana. Public Officials and Public Employees that have attended training approach their positions with confidence, professionalism and better equipped to handle the myriad of tasks that Local Governments face.

The next Constitutionally required Local Government Review process begins in 2014. Montana's Constitution requires a vote to create Local Government Study Commissions every 10 years as part of the Local Government Review. The Local Government Center has provided critical training and technical assistance to Study Commissioners as they study their local form of government and explore alternatives. I have worked with Study Commissioners during past Local Government Reviews and without the training and resources provided by LGC the process would be extremely difficult and overwhelming.

I, personally, have attended the Montana Municipal Clerks, Treasurers and Finance Officers Association annual Institute since 1985. First as an attendee and for the last eleven years I have been on the Education Committee with nine years as the Education Committee Chair. I have participated in Webinars and accessed many other resources of LGC over the years. I have and continue to work closely with the dedicated staff of the Local Government Center. They are tremendously committed to providing current, timely, and most importantly affordable education for our Elected Officials and Public Employees. I do not know of anywhere else that I could have received the training needed for my position.

I urge you to add funding to MSU Extension's budget to support the work of the Local Government Center. Without their efforts, local government officials, both elected and non-elected alike, will have nowhere to go for education and information. Since the majority of local governments are small, with limited resources, the chaos that would ensue could be even more devastating on the health and welfare of the public they serve.

Sincerely,

Brenda L. Schneider, MMC/CPFA/MMCT

Town Clerk Treasurer

Town of Superior, MT

Education Committee Chair

Montana Municipal Clerk, Treasurers and Finance Officers Association

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

I'm writing in support of the Local Government Center. Every Town and City in Montana has used the services provided by Local Government Center. Most of our communities are small with a very small budget and we use the help that Dan and his staff provide for us. The trainings are extremely valuable since most of the clerks come into this job with no idea how local government works. This training also is provided for Mayors and Council members who also have no idea what they are doing.

Cathy Grose

Town Clerk/Treasurer

Town of Twin Bridges

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

The Local Government Center in Bozeman is a current, constant and accesible resource for Municipal Clerks, Treasurer's and Finance Officers. Their responses to questions provide quick references to State Law, and best policies and procedures to follow in the day to day operation of local government. They also provide educational training through the Annual Clerk's Treasure's and Finance Officer's Institute, plus local educational training sessions that are also invaluable for local government personnel and elected officials. Thank you for continuing to fund the LGS.

Necile Lorang, CMC

Whitefish City Clerk

Dear Education Appropriations Subcommittee:

For nearly 30 years, the Town of Wibaux has been sending its clerk to the Montana Municipal Clerk's, Finance Officers and Treasurer's Institute. Over the years, that has been at least 4 different clerks. We have found it a most valuable training opportunity. We are located along the eastern Montana border, a long way from many other training opportunities. The clerk can sometimes feel pretty isolated. The MSU Local Government Center plays a key role in pulling the clerk's institute together. But that's not all the center does. The staff doesn't just get to just slide the rest of the year. We have utilized them in the past to help us put together personnel policies and to train mayors and council persons on their legal responsibilities and roles. Most recently, the Local Government Center helped put together a clerk's association list serve, and the center's staff frequently adds its expertise to questions posed throughout the year on the list serve by both new and experienced municipal employees. Small towns such as ours have limited resources. By assisting us with our training needs, the Local Government Center helps us stretch those resources further.

Ginny Archdale
Wibaux